

MISCELLANEOUS - R-CG MONITORING REPORT  
CITY WIDE

ITEM #11.5

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In October 2014 Council added the Residential – Grade-Oriented Infill (R-CG) District to Land Use Bylaw 1P2007. The R-CG District is a residential land use district that allows for a range of housing where each house has its own entry at ground level facing the street. The district is primarily for rowhouses, but also allows for single detached, side-by-side and duplex homes all of which may include secondary suites. Rowhouses are essentially single houses attached together at the side.

When the R-CG District was adopted no parcels were immediately redesignated to R-CG so the district has been applied through site specific land use amendments or local area policy, such as Main Streets. To track the uptake of the district, Council directed Administration to report annually on the number of applications received and their status. This report includes application data and identifies issues that have been consistently raised at Public Hearings of Council and by the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC).

Although a number of issues were identified through the monitoring process, the key issues are as follows:

- The appropriateness of allowing secondary suites in rowhouses and the associated allowance for parking, which is considered overly permissive;
- The appropriateness of a maximum building height of 11.0 metres for rowhouses, which raises concerns regarding impacts to the context and character of the street; and
- Required front and side yard setbacks for rowhouses on corner parcels are considered overly deep.

Other issues identified for the R-CG District, such as how to apply the Multi-Residential Locational Criteria, how to manage privacy on neighbouring parcels and how to sensitively integrate larger buildings into established neighbourhoods, are common to all the infill districts. Since these are broader issues affecting all infill districts, Administration recommends that they be considered along with other issues that Council has identified regarding infill development. A research and engagement focused work program is described in the upcoming Infill Scoping report (PUD2017-1125) that is scheduled for the 2018 December 18 meeting of Council. This work will focus on exploring ways to better integrate infill development into established communities and better align the districts with evolving local area policy and the Municipal Development Plan (MDP).

The timeline for some of the more complex infill issues would likely extend into 2019. To address key issues sooner, Administration recommends a two-phase approach:

- Phase 1 would address the key issues identified above and return to the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) in 2018 Q3.

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- Phase 2 would address infill issues more comprehensively, including the issues identified with R-CG and return to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development (PUD) with a framework to address the more complex infill issues through policy and land use regulation in 2018 Q4. Phase 2 is currently proposed as a recommendation in the Infill Scoping Report (PUD2017-1125).

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

At the 2014 October 06 meeting, Council directed Administration to report back to the Calgary Planning Commission annually on the number of R-CG District applications made and the status/outcome of the applications, starting on the second-year anniversary of the effective date of the bylaw. Bylaw 24P2014, that added the R-CG District to Land Use Bylaw 1P2007, came into force 2014 October 27.

**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2017 November 30

That Calgary Planning Commission **RECEIVE AND ACCEPT FOR INFORMATION** the R-CG Monitoring Report.

**THE CALGARY PLANNING COMMISSION:**

- RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED FOR INFORMATION** the R-CG Monitoring Report.
- Directed this report be forwarded to the 2017 December 18 meeting of Council.

**RECOMMENDATION(S) OF THE CALGARY PLANNING COMMISSION**

That Council:

- DIRECT** Administration to review, for the R-CG district, secondary suites, parking for secondary suites, rowhouse maximum building height, and corner rowhouse issues, and report with recommendations to Council, through Calgary Planning Commission, by 2018 Q3.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Administration's recommendations reflect that the issues with infill in the R-CG District overlap with concerns and issues in other infill districts, such as R-C1, R-C2, M-CG, M-C1 and M-C2. The recommendations of this report are designed to rectify key issues identified in the R-CG District in the short term, while supporting a longer-term, research and engagement to address more complex infill issues, such as neighbourhood character and compatibility.

The Infill Scoping Report (PUD2017-1125) and the R-CG Monitoring report propose a shared work plan for 2018. Considering their shared work plan, Administration recommends that these two reports be considered at the same meeting of Council on 2017 December 18.

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**ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION TO CALGARY PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. Recommend that Calgary Planning Commission **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the R-CG Monitoring Report.
2. Direct this report be forwarded to the 2017 December 18 meeting of Council.
3. Recommend that Council **DIRECT** Administration to review, for the R-CG district, secondary suites, parking for secondary suites, rowhouse maximum building height, and corner rowhouse issues, and report with recommendations to Council, through Calgary Planning Commission, by 2018 Q3.

**Moved by: L. Juan**

**Carried: 7 – 0**

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## MONITORING RESULTS

To evaluate the performance of the R-CG District, land use amendment applications are monitored to record the recommendation of Calgary Planning Commission (CPC), the decision of Council and to note concerns or support for the R-CG District identified by the public or Council at the Public Hearing or by CPC. This provides information about both the performance and the perception of the district. In addition, development permits are monitored to consider development outcomes in reference to the intent of the district and identified concerns.

Items that are the subject of consistent concern at Public Hearings and at CPC are as follows:

- Secondary suite parking allowances for rowhouses are overly permissive;
- On corner parcels:
  - privacy and interface conflicts resulting from backyards facing neighbouring side yards;
  - requirements to set buildings back from the streets on corner parcels increase impacts on the rear yards of neighbouring parcels and compromise the relationship of rowhouses to the street; and
  - façades that face front streets on side facing rowhouses often have a lower design quality relative to the façade that faces the side street; and
- Unclear implementation of the Locational Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill.

Table 1 in APPENDIX I provides statistics on the number of applications for the R-CG District and their status. As indicated in the Percent Increase column of Table 1, the number of applications received between October 2016 and September 2017 exceeded the total number of applications received in the two years between October 2014 and September 2016. Of note, 23 development permits were received last year over the seven received in the previous two years—an increase of 229 percent. It is also notable that in the period between October 2014 and September 2017, 30 development permits for rowhouses were submitted in the R-CG District compared to 154 for multi-residential development in the M-CG, M-C1 and M-C2 Districts combined. Given that there are over 15,000 parcels with the M-CG, M-C1 and M-C2 designations and up until this year there were less than 20 parcels with the R-CG designation, this indicates a robust interest in the R-CG District relative to the multi-residential infill districts. In this past year, City-initiated land use amendments for Main Streets and to align with the Banff Trail and North Hill Area Redevelopment Plans have resulted in over a thousand parcels being redesignated to R-CG (Appendix 2: Table 2). This significantly increases the supply of parcels with the R-CG designation. Since these land use amendments were just approved this past spring and summer, only a few development permits have been submitted in these areas. The maps contained in Appendices III and IV show the lands redesignated to R-CG by City-initiated land use amendments.

It is worth noting that all the development permits for rowhouses are located on corner parcels. Rowhouse developments on corner parcels allow a developer to reach the maximum density in the district (a typical corner parcel would yield four units while the same parcel mid-block would yield only three units). Developers with building experience in the R-CG District have indicated

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that the market for narrow, mid-block rowhouses is uncertain and the return is generally insufficient to risk site specific land use amendment. These developers promote allowing back-to-back fourplexes or stacked units mid-block to increase the development potential on mid-block sites

Mid-block R-CG parcels resulting from City initiated land use amendments offer the opportunity to monitor the development potential of mid-block locations where land use amendment, with the associated risks and timelines, is not required. Broader engagement that is planned in the upcoming year on infill housing will help define the appropriate scale and form of infill housing mid-block and provide the opportunity to explore the potential for additional configurations.

## DISCUSSION

To support greater housing choice and reinforce the character, quality and stability of existing residential neighbourhoods, the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) encourages growth and change to add a diverse mix of ground-oriented housing in existing low-density residential neighbourhoods. Ground-oriented housing is characterized by houses with entries that open at grade and face the street. This type of housing maintains a building pattern that in its form, mass and site design is compatible with existing homes in low-density residential neighbourhoods.

The rules of the R-CG District are intended to support the sensitive integration of a wide variety of low-density multi-housing developments, allow for innovative site configurations and facilitate evolving redevelopment of a variety of ground-oriented housing over time. The specific mix of ground-oriented housing included in the R-CG District is consistent with the mix of ground-oriented housing supported in the MDP. Housing forms included in the R-CG District are rowhouses, semi-detached dwellings, cottage housing, duplexes, secondary suites and backyard suites. The rules and regulations of the district consider the infill context and respond to typical lot patterns and development conditions in developed low-density residential neighbourhoods.

### ***Secondary Suites in Rowhouses***

The R-CG District allows both secondary suites and backyard suites on bare land units with individual rowhouses, semi-detached units or single detached dwellings. This provides flexibility and choice for home owners and helps increase the diversity and affordability of housing in low-density neighbourhoods.

There is no parking requirement for suites that are 45 square metres or smaller. This allowance reflects a generally low rate of car ownership for occupants of small rental suites. It also facilitates small secondary suites and backyard suites on parcels that are typical of the infill context and lack the area required for additional parking.

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Seven of the 28 development permits received since October 2014 include proposals that include secondary suites in rowhouses. In all cases every rowhouse unit contains a secondary suite and the suites are less than 45 square metres, meaning that no additional parking stalls are required or provided for the secondary suites.

Council and residents have expressed concern that the parking exception in the R-CG District allows additional density without appropriately accounting for vehicles associated with additional households. Residents are concerned that a lack of adequate on-site parking will result in parking that spills over onto the shared public street.

There are several regulations that could be adjusted to require parking or limit suites in the rowhouse buildings:

- a) Apply a parking requirement for every suite, no matter the floor area. Increasing the parking requirement would make it so that suites would generally not be feasible in developments that are already maximizing district density, such as four-unit developments on typical corner parcels. Larger parcels that have space for additional parking stalls could continue to accommodate secondary suites in some of the rowhouse units.
- b) Delete the allowance for suites in rowhouse buildings, eliminating the potential of suites to be combined with rowhouses.
- c) Allow secondary suites only on end rowhouse units and not in middle units. This would reduce the number of secondary suites permitted in each rowhouse building.
- d) Add a district modifier to the R-CG District that Council could use to prevent suites in rowhouse buildings at the land use redesignation stage. This would still allow for secondary suites in rowhouses when Council deems it appropriate.

***Rowhouses Building Height and Context***

A matter of ongoing concern for adjoining landowners and communities is the potential impact of the maximum building height of 11.0 metres for rowhouses. As displayed at recent public hearings of Council, adjoining landowners and communities are concerned about the impacts an 11.0 metre building could have on the context of the existing houses on the street and character of the neighbourhood. To manage this impact, the R-CG District currently contains rules that step the height from neighbouring parcels, in line with the contextual height rules of R-C2 or R-C1, and limits the cross-section of third storeys. Although there is recognition that an 11.0 metre building height may be appropriate in certain circumstances, a provision that allows more consideration of the individual context may be required.

***Rowhouses on Corner Parcels***

Corner parcels benefit from streets on both the front and side elevations. The R-CG District maintains front and side setback requirements on corner parcels while allowing rowhouse buildings to be built up to the rear property line. This encourages site configurations that face houses onto both front and side streets. Having housing that faces both streets enhances the residential appearance of both streets, slows traffic and enhances pedestrian safety and

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experience on adjacent sidewalks. District rules for building coverage and amenity space regulate development on corner parcels to ensure that usable outdoor space is still provided.

Concern has been raised that meeting the setback rules impacts the privacy of the existing neighbours and results in a building form that would better activate the pedestrian realm if it were located closer to the sidewalk. CPC and Council have expressed interest in considering reduced side and front yard setback requirements on corner rowhouse units to pull the buildings closer to the street, further from neighbouring buildings and to locate more amenity space to the rear of the building.

Currently the side setback on a corner parcel is 1.2 metres from the property line or 3.0 metres from the back of the sidewalk, whichever is greater. The 3.0 metre setback from the back of the sidewalk is enough to accommodate medium tree species. Previous discussions with Council have indicated that trees, both public and private, are important to communities. Where rowhouses are pulled right up to the property line it may not be feasible to provide trees along the street, although there would be a more direct relationship between the building with the street. Due to typical parcel dimensions, rowhouse units on a corner parcel will primarily face the side property line.

The front setback requirement for a rowhouse building is based on the front setbacks of neighbouring houses and is intended to match the setback to the context of the block face. This way of determining the front setback was chosen so that the development permitted in R-CG would be consistent with what is allowed in other low-density districts, such as R-C2. Consistent requirements are intended to make it easier for new development to be integrated in established low-density residential neighbourhoods.

The illustrations contained in APPENDIX V detail how front and side setbacks are determined on corner parcels and how they relate to building location on the site. Administration recommends exploring reduced side and front setbacks for rowhouse buildings on corner parcels while maintaining sufficient separation between the sidewalk and building foundation to accommodate healthy street trees.

***Consistent façade design on street facing façades***

Council also identified inconsistent façade design quality on rowhouse developments on corner parcels. In this case it was noted that the building façades that face front streets on side facing rowhouses often have a lower design quality relative to the façade that faces the side street. As this is primarily a design issue, it is not easily solved using Land Use Bylaw rules. Design considerations are better managed using a combination of policy and design guidelines that are supported by land use rules. Administration proposes addressing this concern through a process that will integrate recommendations for policy, guidelines and regulation relating to infill development.

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## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Administration concludes that a comprehensive review of the R-CG District and the issues noted above is needed to ensure the district is achieving the desired outcomes. Potential Land Use Bylaw amendments to address the identified issues will likely have bearing on the implementation of other infill land use districts, including R-C1, R-C2, M-CG, M-C1 and M-C2. This would indicate a need for a more integrated review of infill issues. Since timelines for a broader infill review would result in a longer project timeline, Administration recommends a two-phase approach that allows key concerns to be addressed sooner.

### *Phase 1:*

Administration is recommending that the following key concerns be addressed in the short term:

- Secondary suites in rowhouses;
- Parking considerations for secondary suites in rowhouses;
- Maximum building height rules for rowhouses that allow more site-specific consideration; and
- Setbacks of rowhouses on corner parcels.

Phase 1 will deliver amendments to the R-CG District to resolve the issues with these infill situations. The recommendations from this work will inform the work on more interdependent infill issues proposed in the Phase 2 work plan. Amendments to address key issues would be delivered to Council via the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) by Q3, 2018.

### *Phase 2:*

A broader research and engagement approach is proposed through the Infill Scoping report (PUD2017-1125) that is to be presented to the SPC on PUD on 2017 December 13. The issues not addressed in the first phase will be addressed at this phase. The work plan for Phase 2 will focus on a number of related infill issues, ensuring a consistent approach to infill development forms.

This approach would support Administration in managing immediate issues while developing Land Use Bylaw and policy solutions common to infill development forms.

### ***Timeline and Alignment with Infill Scoping Report***

Should Council approve Administration's recommendations in the Infill Scoping report, an integrated work plan to address more complex and interdependent infill issues would begin in 2018 Q1 and would result in a strategy report to Council no later than 2018 Q4. This report would summarize the outcome of the engagement process and recommend potential solutions and options for issues with the R-CG District not addressed as part of Phase 1.



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The key issues in Phase 1 will be placed on an accelerated timeline with a report back with proposed Land Use Bylaw amendments in early 2018 Q3. Discussion during the Phase 1 engagement would inform the broader infill engagement for Phase 2. This would result in cost and time savings by maximizing engagement sessions and reduce consultation fatigue with stakeholders. This work is a priority for the 2018 planning policy priorities services program.

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APPENDIX I

**TABLE 1: R-CG APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM  
OCTOBER 2014 TO SEPTEMBER 2017**

Table 1: R-CG Applications Received from October 2014 to September 2017											
		Ward 01	Ward 07	Ward 08	Ward 09	Ward 10	Ward 11	Total	Total Oct '14 to Sep '16	Total Oct '16 to Sep '17	% Increase in Applications Oct '16–Sep '17 over Oct '14–Sep '16
<b>Land Use Amendments</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>52%</b>
	Approved	1	13	8	3	1	6	32	14	18	
	Refused		3	2			1	6	2	4	
	Cancelled			2			1	3	2	1	
	In Process	2	4	7	2		2	17	5	12	
<b>Development Permits</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>229%</b>
	Released		3	4		1	2	10	4	6	
	Approved		4	3				4	2	2	
	Cancelled			1				1	0	1	
	In Process	1	5	4	1		1	15	1	1	
<b>Building Permits</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>75%</b>
	Completed		2	1			1	4	0	4	
	Issued			1				1	2	-1	
	Cancelled			1				1	1	0	
	In Process		2	2			1	5	1	4	

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APPENDIX II

TABLE 2: CITY INITIATED LAND USE AMENDMENTS TO R-CG

Table 2: City Initiated Land Use Amendments to R-CG		
Project	Location	Number of Parcels
Main Streets	17 Avenue SW	127
	37 Street SW	174
	Montgomery	211
Banff Trail / North Hill ARP	Banff Trail & Capitol Hill	597
	Total	1109

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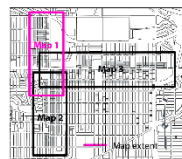
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APPENDIX III

MAPS OF MAIN STREETS CITY INITIATED LAND USE AMENDMENTS

Main Street: **37 Street S.W.**  
Rosscarrock, Killarney/Glengarry and Glendale

Map 1



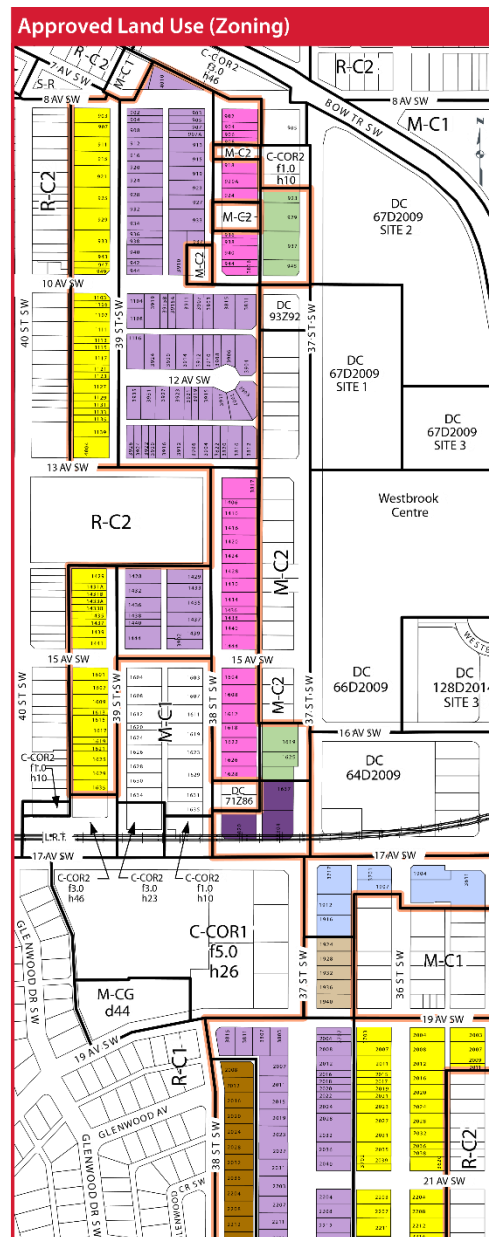
LEGEND

- Land Use District Boundary
- Parcels to be Redesignated
- Ownership Parcels
- 37 St SW / 17 Av SW Main Streetboundary

Proposed land use designations

- Residential - Contextual One / Two Dwelling District R-C2 (2 to 3 storeys, 10 metre maximum)
- Residential Grade-Oriented Infill District R-CG (2 to 3 storeys, 11 metre maximum)
- Multi Residential Contextual Low Profile District M-C1 (3 to 4 storeys, 14 metre maximum)
- Multi Residential Contextual Medium Profile District M-C2 (3 to 5 storeys, 16 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use General District MU-1 f3 h16 (3 to 4 storeys, 16 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use General District MU-1 f3.5 h22 (5 to 6 storeys, 22 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use Active Frontage District MU-2 f5.0 h26 (7 to 8 storeys, 26 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use Active Frontage District MU-2 f3.0 h46 (14 to 15 storeys, 46 metre maximum)

(f - Floor Area Ratio, limits density allowed on site)  
(h - Height, maximum allowed building height in metres)



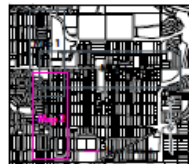
This land use was approved, by Council, May 8th, 2017.

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# Main Street: 37 Street S.W. Rosscarrock, Killarney/Glengarry and Glendale

Map 2



LEGEND

- Land Use District Boundary
  - Parcels to be Redesignated
  - Ownership Parcels
  - 37 St SW / 17 Av SW Main Streets boundary
- Proposed Land Use Designations
- Residential - Contextual One / Two Dwelling District **R-C2**  
(2 to 3 storeys, 10 metre maximum)
  - Residential Grade-Oriented Infill District **R-CG**  
(2 to 3 storeys, 11 metre maximum)
  - Multi Residential Contextual Low Profile District **M-C1**  
(3 to 4 storeys, 14 metre maximum)
  - Mixed Use General District **MU-1** (3 h16  
(3 to 4 storeys, 16 metre maximum)
  - Mixed Use-Active Frontage District **MU-2** (5.0 h26  
(7 to 8 storeys, 26 metre maximum)
- (f) = Floor Area Ratio, limits density allowed on site;  
(h) = Height, maximum allowed building height in metres)



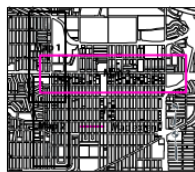
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# Main Street: 37 Street S.W. Rosscarrock, Killarney/Glengarry and Glendale

Map 3



LEGEND

- Land Use District Boundary
- Parcels to be Redesignated
- Ownership Parcels
- 37 St SW / 17 Av SW Main Streets Boundary

Proposed Land Use Designations

- Residential - Contextual One / Two Dwelling District R-C2 (2 to 3 storeys, 10 metre maximum)
- Residential Grade-Oriented Infill District R-CG (2 to 3 storeys, 11 metre maximum)
- Multi Residential Contextual Low Profile District M-C1 (3 to 4 storeys, 14 metre maximum)
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- Mixed Use General District MU-1 F3 h16 (3 to 4 storeys, 16 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use General District MU-1 F4.5 h22 (5 to 6 storeys, 22 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use General District MU-1 F4.5 h23 (5 to 6 storeys, 23 metre maximum)

- Mixed Use-Active Frontage District MU-2 F4.5 h22 (5 to 6 storeys, 22 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use-Active Frontage District MU-2 F5.0 h26 (7 to 8 storeys, 26 metre maximum)
- Mixed Use-Active Frontage District MU-2 F3.0 h16 (14 to 15 Storeys, 46 metre maximum)

(f = Floor Area Ratio; height density allowed on site)  
(h = Height; maximum allowed building height in metres)

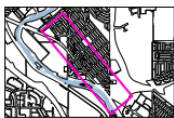


This land use was approved by Council May 8, 2017.

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# Main Street: **Montgomery**



Key Map  
Map Extent  
Parcels to be redesignation

## LEGEND

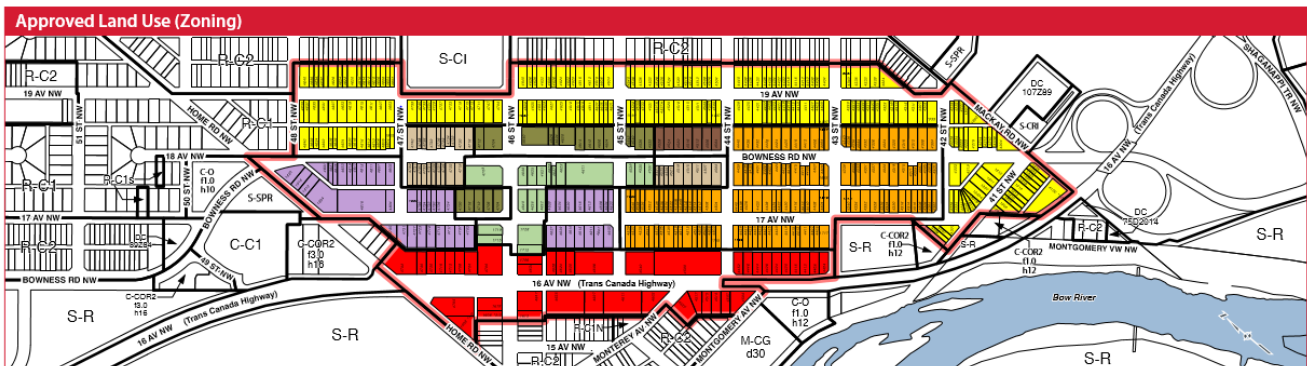
Land Use District Boundary  
Parcels to be Redesignated  
Ownership Parcels  
Montgomery Main Streets Boundary

## Proposed Land Use Designations

Residential Grade-Oriented Infill District R-CG  
(2 to 3 storeys, 11 metre maximum)  
Multi Residential Contextual Grade-Oriented District M-CG  
(2 to 3 storeys, 12 metre maximum)  
Multi Residential Contextual Low Profile District M-C1  
(3 to 4 storeys, 14 metre maximum)  
Commercial Corridor 2 District C-COR2 f4.5 h22  
(5 to 6 storeys, 22 metre maximum)

Mixed Use General District MU-1 f3 h16  
(3 to 4 storeys, 16 metre maximum)  
Mixed Use General District MU-1 f4.5 h22  
(5 to 6 storeys, 22 metre maximum)  
Mixed Use Active Frontage District MU-2 f3 h16  
(3 to 4 storeys, 16 metre maximum)  
Mixed Use Active Frontage District MU-2 f4.5 h22  
(5 to 6 storeys, 22 metre maximum)

(f = Floor Area Ratio; limits density allowed on site)  
(h = Height; maximum allowed building height in metres)



This land use was approved by Council May 8, 2017.

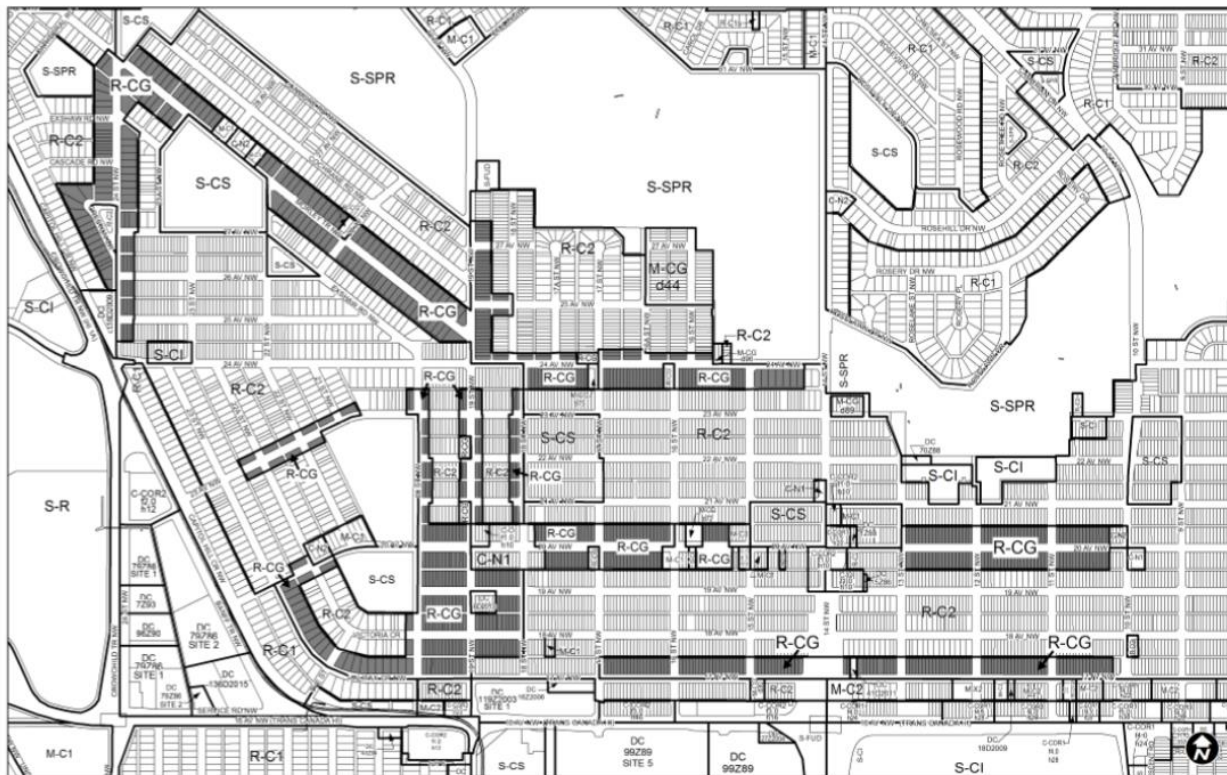


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## APPENDIX IV

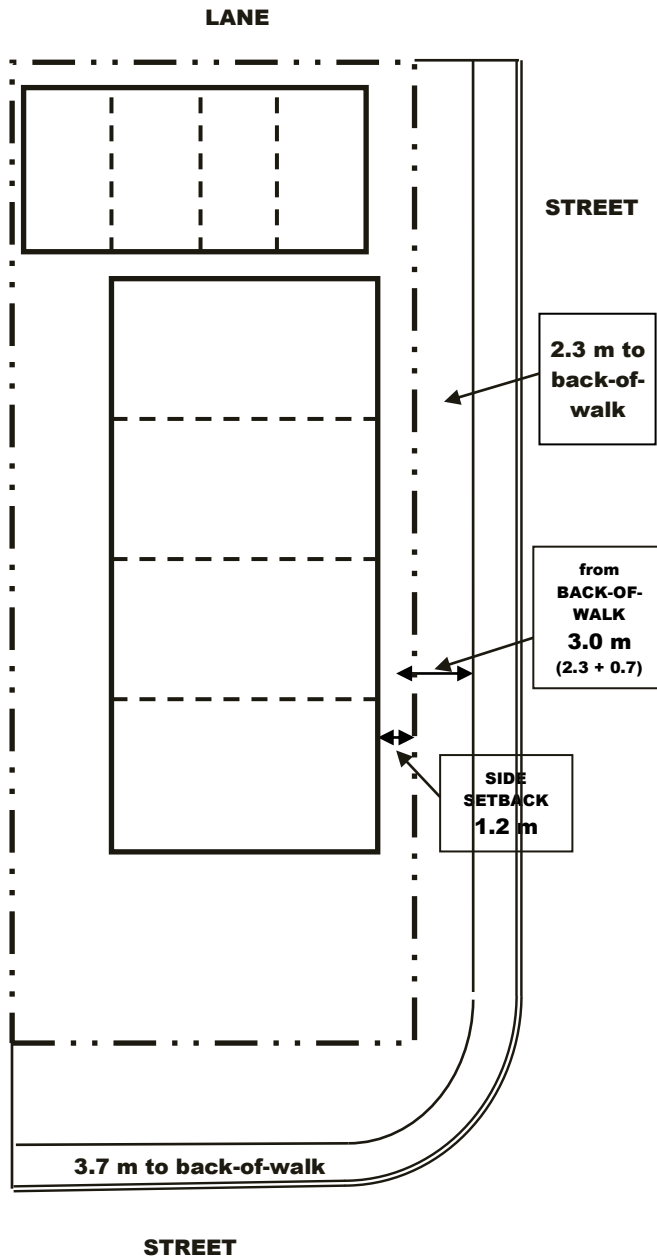
## MAP OF CITY-INITIATED LAND USE AMENDMENTS IN CAPITOL HILL AND BANFF TRAIL





APPENDIX V

ILLUSTRATIONS: BUILDING SETBACKS ON CORNER PARCELS



**Figure 1**  
**CALCULATING the SIDE SETBACK**

The required side setback is 1.2 metres  
OR  
3.0 metres from the back-of-walk  
(in this case 2.3 m + 0.7 m  
from property line)  
whichever is greater  
Required side setback is 1.2 metres

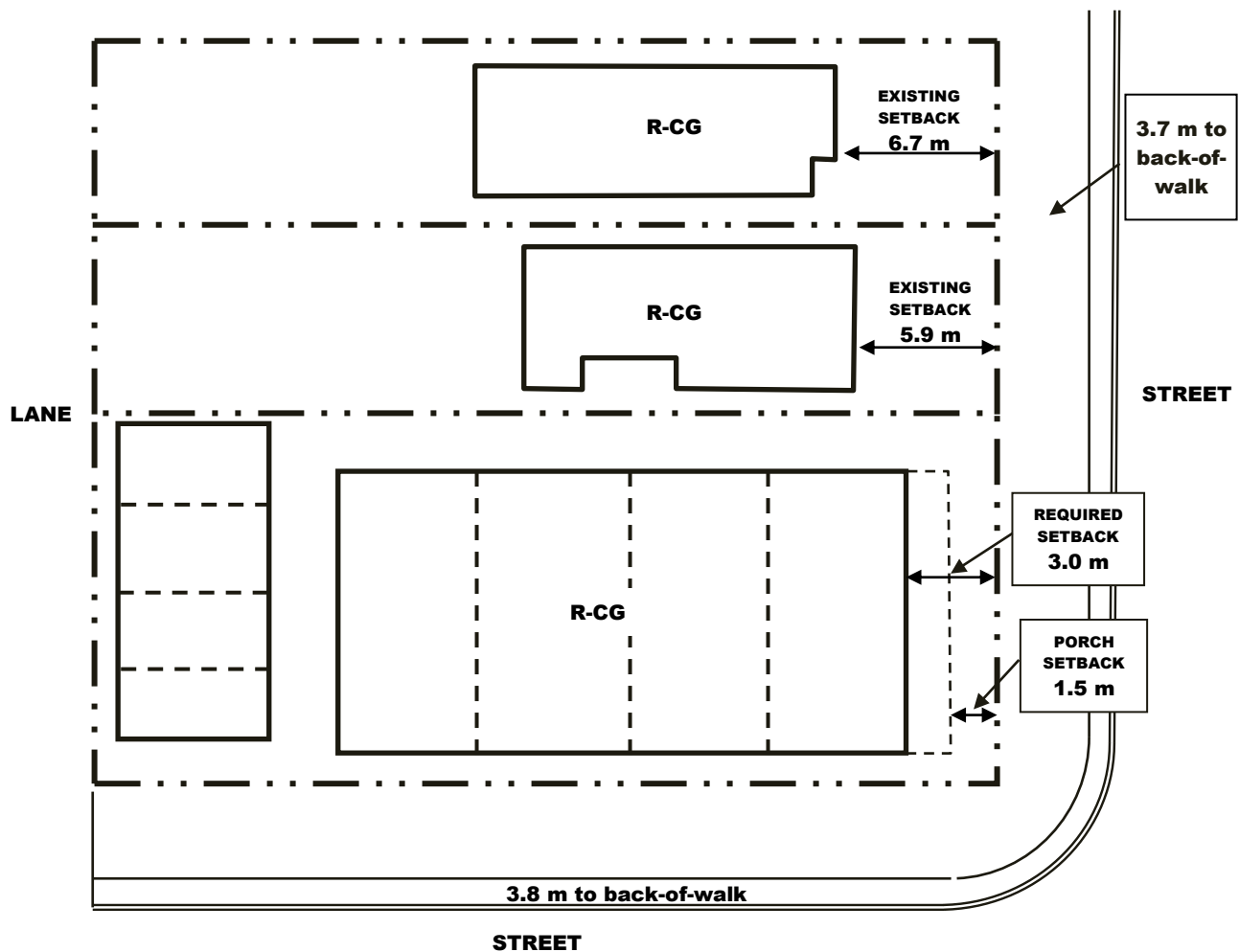
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**Figure 2**  
**CALCULATING the FRONT SETBACK**  
(applies where neighbouring parcels  
are not low density districts)

The required front setback is 3.0 metres

A porch can project 1.5 metres into the required front setback



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**Figure 3**  
**CALCULATING the CONTEXTUAL FRONT SETBACK**  
(applies next door to low density residential districts other than R-CG)

The required front setback is equal to the average setback of  
the two closest parcels on either side less 1.5 metres

**EXAMPLE**

**Avg. setback**

$$(6.7\text{m} + 5.9\text{m}) / 2 = 6.3\text{m}$$

**Avg. setback less 1.5m**

$$6.3\text{m} - 1.5\text{m} = 4.8\text{m}$$

**Required front setback is 4.8 m**

**A porch can project 1.5 metres  
into the required front setback**

